

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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FOLLOWING REPEAT JIDDA 4040 SENT ACTION SECSTATE SEPT. 18:

QUOTE

S E C R E T JIDDA 4040

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, SA
SUBJECT: FAREWELL MEETING WITH KING FAISAL

INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY: KING WAS GRACIOUS AND RESTRAINED DURING MY FAREWELL CALL AND HAVE RARELY SEEN HIM IN BETTER FORM. AS DESCRIBED BELOW, HE EXPOUNDED MANY OF HIS FAVORITE IDEAS BUT SPOKE CLEARLY AND RAPIDLY, OCCASIONALLY SUPPLYING SUBSTANTIATING DETAIL. HIS TONE WAS ONE OF COURTEOUS EXHORTATION THROUGHOUT, WITH EMPHASIS ON DESIRABILITY USG RETRIEVING ITS POSITION IN MIDDLE EAST SO THAT NOT ONLY WOULD SAUDI-US FRIENDSHIP BE STRENGTHENED BUT WAY WOULD BE OPEN FOR ALL ARABS TO TAKE FRIENDLY VIEW TOWARDS U.S. END SUMMARY.

1. CONVERSATION OPENED WITH MY REMARKING ON FRIENDSHIP AND COURTESY I HAD ENJOYED DURING MY STAY IN SAUDI ARABIA. AFTER COUPLE UNSUCCESSFUL ATTEMPTS TO DRAW THE KING INTO SOME COMMENTS ON INTERNAL AFFAIRS, I NOTED HOW UNDER HIS MAJESTY'S LEADERSHIP WE HAD WITNESSED IMPROVEMENT AND STRENGTHENING
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OF SAUDI ARABIA'S POSITION VIS-A-VIS ALMOST ALL ITS NEIGHBORS. GIVEN STRONG AMERICAN INTEREST IN SAUDI SECURITY AND STABILITY, THIS WAS OF COURSE SOURCE OF SATISFACTION AND REASSURANCE TO US.

2. THIS GAVE KING OPENING TO LAUNCH INTO HIS FAVORITE SUBJECT. HE COMMENTED AT OUTSET THAT ONE EVIDENCE OF ZIONIST MACHINATIONS WAS MANNER IN WHICH HIS VIEWPOINTS HAD BEEN EXPLOITED ON U.S. TELEVISION TO CONVEY INCORRECT IMPRESSIONS.

3. KING THEN ELABORATED HIS THEORY THAT COMMUNISM WORKING THROUGH ZIONISM SEEKS DOMINATE MIDDLE EAST AND U.S. ALSO. HE CITED EVENTS FROM HIS PERSONAL EXPERIENCE, SUCH AS SIGHT OF ISRAELI AND COMMUNIST DELEGATES EMBRACING IN CORRIDORS OF U.N. FOLLOWING MAY 1948 VOTE EXTENDING UN MEMBERSHIP TO ISRAEL. HE CLAIMED THAT BERNADOTTE HAD DEVELOPED PROPOSALS OPPOSING PARTITION OF PALESTINE AND THAT USG HAD FAVORED BERNADOTTE'S APPROACH, BUT THAT THIS ENDEAVOR HAD BEEN DEFEATED BY COMMUNIST-BLOC GOVTS IN UN. SINCE THEN ZIONISM HAD STEADILY EXPANDED ITS POWER. US INTERESTS WERE WITH ARABS, YET WE CONTINUED SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL. ZIONIST INFLUENCE WAS CLEARLY AT WORK TO DESTROY SAUDI-US FRIENDSHIP. OVERALL THRUST OF KING'S REMARKS WAS DIRECTED MORE AGAINST COMMUNISM THAN ZIONISM, SINCE LATTER IS SIMPLY TOOL OF FORMER.

4. SINCE HIS MAJESTY HAD JUST BEEN AT ALGIERS MEETING. I WONDERED WHAT IMPRESSIONS HE HAD GAINED THERE REGARDING RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN ISRAEL AND USSR. FAISAL REPLIED QUICKLY THAT, OF COURSE, COMMUNIST-BLOC NATIONS WOULD OFTEN SEEM TO BE ANTI-ISRAEL, BUT THAT THIS WAS PURELY A PRETENSE AIMED AT FOOLING THE WESTLAND THE ARABS.

5. REMINDED FAISAL THAT PRESIDENT HAD AT PRESS CONFERENCE ONLY TEN DAYS AGO AFFIRMED USG NEITHER PRO-ARAB NOR PRO-ISRAEL, ONLY PRO-PEACE.

6. KING HAD NOTICED PRESIDENT'S STATEMENT, BUT DAY OR SO AFTERWARDS SECRETARYDESIGNATE KISSINGER HAD ANNOUNCED THERE WAS NO CHANGE IN U.S. POLICY OF FIRM SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL.
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7. TOLD KING THAT DR. KISSINGER'S REMARKS SHOULD BE VIEWED IN PERSPECTIVE OF STRONG USG SUPPORT ALSO FOR SECURITY OF SAUDI ARABIA. AS HIS MAJESTY KNEW, WE WERE BRINGING MAJOR EFFORTS TO BEAR THROUGH OUR VARIOUS MILITARY PROGRAMS TO STRENGTHEN SAUDI DEFENSES. KING THEN GAVE HIS ESTIMATE OF WHAT MUST BE DONE TO ARRIVE AT RESOLUTION OF MIDDLE EAST CONFLICT: (A) ISRAELI FORCES MUST WITHDRAW FROM AREAS OCCUPIED IN 1967 WAR; (B) PALESTINIANS MUST BE ALLOWED TO RETURN IF THEY WISHED TO THE HOMES FROM WHICH THEY HAD BEEN DRIVEN. ONCE THESE TWO STEPS HAD BEEN TAKEN, ALL ELSE COULD BE NEGOTIATED.

8. RECALLED TO KING THAT WE SAW SITUATION DIFFERENTLY.

ERA OF BITTER CONFRONTATIONS WAS PAST. DISPUTING NATIONS WERE MAKING EFFORT SIT DOWN AND RESOLVE THEIR DIFFERENCES. TWO SIDES IN ARAB-ISRAEL CONTEST MUST SIMILARLY GET AROUND TO TASK OF WORKING OUT BETWEEN THEM IN SOME MANNER COMPATIBLE SOLUTION THEIR DIFFERING VIEWPOINTS. SOONER THIS BEGAN THE BETTER.

9. KING WENT BACK OVER HIS POINTS ONCE MORE AND I RESPONDED BY ADMISSION THAT ARAB-ISRAELI ISSUE WAS INDEED VITAL ONE, BUT THAT IT WAS MISTAKE CONSIDER THIS ONLY ASPECT OF MIDDLE EAST SITUATION WHICH NEEDED ATTENTION. SAUDI ARABIA ITSELF WAS ON THRESHOLD INSPIRING NEW PERIOD NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN WHICH ITS PEOPLE COULD REASONABLY LOOK FOR GREAT IMPROVEMENT IN MANY ASPECTS THEIR SOCIAL WELFARE. USG AND US PRIVATE SECTOR ANXIOUS BE OF HELP SINCE IF SAUDI ARABIA, ONE OF LEADING ARAB NATIONS, SUCCEEDED, THEN STRONG BULWARK AGAINST COMMUNIST ENCROACHMENT WOULD HAVE BEEN CREATED. STRONGER SAUDI DEFENSES AND ITS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT WERE GOALS DECIDEDLY IN OUR MUTUAL INTEREST.

10. FAISAL ASSERTED HIS WARNINGS WERE GIVEN STRICTLY IN SPIRIT OF FRIENDSHIP TO POINT OUT GRAVE RISKS HE SAW FOR U.S. IN GROWTH OF ZIONIST POWER AND HIS EARNEST HOPE WE COULD BRING ABOUT REALIZATION OF THE TWO MAIN REQUIREMENTS HE HAD NOTED. ON BASIS OF RESOLUTION 242 WAY WOULD THEN BE OPENED FOR INCREASED FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN U.S. AND ALL ARAB STATES, GOAL WHICH SAUDI ARABIA CONSIDERED MOST IMPORTANT AND
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EARNESTLY DESIRED.

11. I CONCLUDED BY SAYING I WANTED LEAVE ONE IDEA FIRMLY IN HIS MAJESTY'S MIND: THERE NO QUESTION BUT PRESIDENT GIVING HIGH PRIORITY TO CONSIDERATION MIDDLE EAST ISSUE. DESPITE PROBLEM'S INTRICACY AND DIFFICULTY, USG WILL CONTINUE REGARD IT AS ONE TO WHICH WE SHALL DEVOTE UNRELENTING EFFORT AND IMAGINATION. MEETING CLOSED WITH EXPRESSIONS MUTUAL REGARD AND GENEROUS REMARKS BY KING ON MY CONTRIBUTIONS TO US-SAUDI FRIENDSHIP.

12. COMMENT: NO DOUBT COURTESY REQUIRED FAISAL BE GRACIOUS AND RESTRAINED ON OCCASION OF FAREWELL CALL BY DEPARTING AMBASSADOR. YET SOME FURTHER IMPORTANCE MAY BE ATTACHED, WE THINK, TO KING'S CLEAR AVOIDANCE OF ANY WORDS THAT COULD BE TAKEN AS THREATENING. HIS COMMENT ABOUT U.S. TV "EXPLOITATION" OF HIS REMARKS TO CORRESPONDENTS SEEMS TO SHOW SOME CONCERN THAT "WARNINGS" ISSUED HAD MORE IMPACT THAN HE INTENDED. WE WONDER TOO WHETHER EXPOSURE TO COMMUNIST STATES' MANEUVERINGS AND POSTURINGS AT ALGIERS MIGHT NOT HAVE DRIVEN KING TO FOCUS HIS THINKING MORE INTENTLY ON

THREAT POSED BY THESE STATES TO CONSERVATIVE REGIMES SUCH AS HIS OWN, AND ON DESIRABILITY MAINTAINING STRONG TIES WITH U.S. (AT SOCIAL AFFAIR SAQQAF EXCLAIMED TO ME WITH SOME APPARENT SURPRISE ON SWEEPING PREVALENCE AT ALGIERS OF COMMUNIST-LINING VIEWPOINTS.) MOREOVER, NOW THAT KING HAS GOTTEN THROUGH ALGIERS CONFERENCE WITH HIS STATUS AS ARAB RULER LOYAL TO THE CAUSE SAFELY PRESERVED, HE CAN AFFORD TO RELAX A BIT AND WATCH THE TURN OF EVENTS. IN SUM, WE INCLINED VIEW BOTH MODERATE TONE AND SUBSTANCE OF FAISAL'S REMARKS AS REFLECTING AN INTERLUDE OF CAUTIOUS SUSPENSE IN SAUDI EVOLUTION OF ITS POLICIES ON OIL AND POLITICS.
THACHER

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